

## Frequently Asked Questions: Providing Free Property Advice

### 1. How does LandAid receive applications for free property advice?

LandAid sources a range of projects that would benefit from free property advice from charity partners we already fund, grant applicants, or organisations that apply for advice. LandAid brokers free property advice for organisations working in the UK with disadvantaged young people, families and communities, including those experiencing homelessness. LandAid not only brokers advice for charities, but also social interest and community groups.

LandAid will work with an applicant to define an initial request for free professional property advice. We look for the following characteristics in a prospective project:

- The organisation involved has a clear objective and has the resource to carry through the property-related project.
- The advice will move a property-related project forward or identify the next steps in delivering a project.
- The application is specific and manageable for the company(s).
- Another company is not already providing advice (on a pro bono or paid basis) offering the same type of advice or service. Several companies may offer free advice to the same charity, for example an architectural firm may provide free planning advice, while a surveyor may offer a free survey at the same time.

### 2. How are companies of advice matched with charities?

A company pledges a number of days' worth of property advice and specifies the particular areas of expertise and where in the country they can offer these skills. When a charity applies for free advice, LandAid will develop the application into a project brief. We will then approach a company with the required skills in the locality of the charity and ask them if they would like to take on the work. When a company has determined that they have the resource to meet a request, LandAid then arrange an introduction and/or initial meeting between the company and charity.

The charity will be the company's client and communication should be directly between the charity and the company. LandAid will be a point of contact throughout the work should there be any difficulties but will not itself give any property advice. LandAid will not be responsible for any property advice given by an advisor.

3. **What is my role if I am nominated as a Land Aid Free Property Advice Coordinator?**

Your company has signed a pledge giving details of the number of days of property advice they are willing to give, the particular areas of property expertise your firm can offer and where in the country your company has these skills available. Under our Code of Conduct your company has agreed that pro bono work is to be given the same priority, attention and care as would be given to a fee-paying client.

As LandAid's Coordinator you will:

- Act as the first point of contact for LandAid and within your company regarding free property advice.
- Manage requests for property advice and identify individuals within your firm who have the skills and resource to take on a particular piece of work.
- Inform LandAid within a reasonable time (a week) as to whether a property request can be met by your firm.
- Collate records of the time spent on the work and rate at which the work would be charged, as if for a fee-paying client. These figures will be provided to LandAid as part of our impact reporting and will also be useful for your company.

4. **What is expected of me as a LandAid company?**

The number of days, areas of property advice expertise, and where in the country your company would like to work has been pledged and specified by your firm. You will have been asked or put yourself forward to give free property advice and as having the right skills and appropriate resource for a particular request.

As a LandAid company of free property advice we ask that you:

- Give free property advice with the same professional standards as if the work was a regular commission.
- Inform LandAid when any problems may occur (e.g. not getting a response from a charity) and if the scope of the work changes. The majority of the communication will however be directly between you and the charity.
- Record the time spent and equivalent charge out rate, as if for a fee-paying client, passing this information to the coordinator within your company.

- Report back to LandAid at the end of a piece of work on the impact and success of the work. LandAid may use this information in case studies and examples of best practice for wider distribution on our website or to our trustees, corporate or charity partners. Your company will also find this information useful as part of recording the contribution of your work.

5. **Who will I be advising as a company?**

You will be advising the management team of a charity or social enterprise/community group on their premises matters. The engagement will often begin with a set-up meeting with the chief executive of the charity and/or another member of staff responsible for the property, finance or management of the charity. This person will then generally be the point of contact for the piece of free work.

It may be that you will be working alongside other property professionals who have been appointed by the charity or as part of a team of LandAid companies of advice, giving a range of professional expertise. LandAid ask charities at the start of a piece of the project about the status of a building project and professionals already involved. Our intention is to assist charities where there are gaps in their expertise, not replace professionals that have already been appointed.

6. **Will I be working directly with children or young people?**

LandAid facilitates the provision of free professional property services. As a company of advice, you will be advising the senior management team and staff of a charity, you will not be working with the children or vulnerable young people they work with.

Working with children or vulnerable young people is subject to particular legal requirements and policies regarding their safeguarding. The charity concerned should advise you of their safeguarding policies. This work will be independent from your role with LandAid as a company. For example, if you are asked to support a young person through a mentoring programme, perhaps with some mock interviews, you should receive appropriate training and criminal record checks.

7. **What kind of organisation will I be working with as a company?**

LandAid brokers free property advice to charities working with disadvantaged young people, families and communities including those experiencing homelessness. Occasionally, LandAid also brokers advice for social enterprise/community groups.

8. **How much experience do I need to give free property advice?**

Pro bono property work should only be undertaken by a professional who is adequately trained and who has appropriate knowledge, skills and experience. A company should have no less than a minimum level of expertise and experience as would be required if the particular work in question was fee paying work. While trainees have an important contribution to make to property work and can gain valuable experience they must be properly supervised.

Charity clients are all very different in their size, complexity and capabilities and will require a company who can build a good client relationship and respond with sensitivity and tact.

9. **Can there be more than one person from my company working with a charity on a pro bono basis?**

It could be that a less experienced individual may work alongside and under the supervision of an experienced colleague on a piece of work. Or several individuals (as part of the same or different companies) may work together on a particular request for advice each bringing their particular area of property expertise.

10. **What will be my time commitment as a company?**

The requests for property advice LandAid receive vary enormously in terms of the amount of time needed; from a one-off engagement requiring work for a number of hours to a team engagement over several stages of a building project.

LandAid work with charities to define their initial application for advice. When you and your company agree in principle to accept a charity's request, there will generally be an initial engagement meeting /conversation between the company and charity. The application will be scoped and agreed in more detail with an indicative number of days required and timescales involved. The work should be managed as if for a fee-paying client, ensuring the appropriate insurance is in place, standard documents are used, and a record is made of the time spent and the rate at which you would normally charge.

It may be that a property project has many elements or is over several stages of a building project- in which case a phased approach can be used. A company may agree to a particular stage of the work and when complete the company and charity can review what the next step may be and if the company is willing to do this.

11. **What if the scope of the work changes or more time is needed to complete the request?**

It may be that an initial application from the charity changes and that your expertise would benefit a charity on a different premises related issue. Or the initial application for advice requires more time to complete. In both cases the company decides as to whether they would like to do the work, bearing in mind the capacity and skills of their company. Please keep LandAid informed if this happens.

**12. What happens if I am unable to do the work due to other work commitments?**

Please let LandAid know if a situation arises where you are unable to complete the piece of advice. LandAid can then look find another company, either from within your company or with another company. We hope however that this is a very rare occurrence and that you will be able to fulfil the request.

**13. Is free property advice covered by my professional indemnity insurance?**

Companies of advice need to ensure that they are covered by the appropriate professional indemnity insurance. Companies may wish to check with their insurance company if there are any particular requirements regarding the provision of advice or if there may be certain types of work that are not to be undertaken on a pro bono basis. It is usual for a company to issue their standard documentation to a charity as with any fee-paying client giving the terms and conditions of the work. The following things may need to be considered:

- The scope of work
- The level of professional indemnity cover for the work
- Whether public liability and employer's liability cover is required
- Whether any expenses (travel and subsistence) are paid for by the charity
- Whether any fees for local authority searches/planning permissions/surveys etc. are needed as part of the work and require payment by the charity
- Any issues regarding copyright
- Whether Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 2015 apply

**14. How is the value and impact of the work recorded?**

LandAid asks that you keep a record of the number of hours spent and the equivalent rate, as if for a fee-paying client, and the figures are provided to LandAid at the end of each financial year. LandAid also asks that you complete a short evaluation of your experience of giving advice. LandAid may use

this information in case studies and examples of best practice. Your company will also find this information useful as part of assessing the contribution of your work.

**15. What happens at the end of a engagement?**

There are a number of ways an engagement can end:

- The application for advice has been fulfilled and nothing further is required.
- A company may agree with a charity to an extension of time or scope of the originally application. A company may not wish to do this and are no obligation to meet this.
- The charity may employ the company and become a fee-paying client. This could be at a discounted or 'low bono' rate, subject to agreement on both sides.

**16. What if our company would like to assist the charity in other ways?**

It may be through the course of working with a charity a company may see additional ways of assisting them. For example, a company may wish to:

- a) Extend the property advice offered through LandAid  
If at the end of a particular piece of work you and/or your company would like to offer additional free expertise, then please discuss this with the charity so that the additional scope of work can be agreed between both parties. Please keep LandAid informed if this occurs.
- b) Offer non-property related advice  
It may be that over the course of an engagement you become aware that the charity would benefit from additional areas of professional expertise that your company is willing to provide on a pro bono basis. Please let LandAid know if this is the case.
- c) Offer building materials or furniture  
Coordinating supplies of building materials or furniture to charities can be complex to ensure that what is needed is there at the right time. LandAid are not involved in this area of charitable work and if this is something your company is interested in doing then please get in touch with [Crash](#).
- d) Give a donation  
Please refer to our webpage on how you can make a [donation](#).
- e) Raise funds for the charity  
Please look at our webpage describing [how to raise funds](#) and make a difference to the lives of disadvantaged children and young people.